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telephones 415 and 515, respectively. Once each user picks up, they are in communication.

In The Claims

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1. (Amended) A network receiving agent operable in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the network receiving agent comprising:

a sensor designed to receive information about an environment;

an environment setting describing the status of a device in the environment; and

an updater designed to update the environment setting based on data input to the sensor.

2. A network receiving agent according to claim 1, wherein the sensor is designed to receive a change in the availability of the device.

3. A network receiving agent according to claim 2, wherein the updater is designed to update the environment setting to reflect the change in the availability of the device.

4. A network receiving agent according to claim 1, the network receiving agent further comprising a receiver designed to receive an inquiry from a network lurking agent.

5. A network receiving agent according to claim 4, wherein the receiver is designed to respond to the inquiry from the network lurking agent based on the environment setting.

6. A network receiving agent according to claim 4, wherein the receiver is designed to access the device in the environment if the device is available.

7. A network receiving agent according to claim 6, wherein the receiver is designed to access the environment setting to determine the availability of the device.

8. A network receiving agent according to claim 4, wherein the receiver is designed to access an active device in the environment.

9. A network receiving agent according to claim 4, the network receiving agent further comprising:

a history store designed to store information about the inquiry, the information about the inquiry including a source of the inquiry; and

a message store designed to store a message from the source of the inquiry when the device is not available.

10. A network receiving agent according to claim 1, wherein the updater is designed to update the environment setting to reflect the availability of a user.

11. (Amended) A network lurking agent operable in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the network lurking agent comprising:

a lurker designed to visit an environment within the Scalable Infrastructure system;
and

an inquirer designed to inquire as to the availability of a device in the environment.

12. A network lurking agent according to claim 11, the network lurking agent further comprising a sender designed to send a message when the inquiry is refused.

13. A network lurking agent according to claim 11, the network lurking agent further comprising a receiver designed to receive a message.

14. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system designed to support network lurking, the Scalable Infrastructure system comprising:

a network receiving agent designed to receive an inquiry about the availability of a device in an environment; and

a network lurking agent designed to send the inquiry to the network receiving agent.

15. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system according to claim 14, wherein the network lurking agent is designed to place the inquiry in a Space in the Scalable Infrastructure system.

16. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system according to claim 15, wherein the Scalable Infrastructure system notifies the network receiving agent about the inquiry when the network lurking agent places the inquiry in the Space.

17. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system according to claim 14, wherein the network receiving agent is designed to store an environment setting in a Space in the Scalable Infrastructure system.

18. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system according to claim 14, wherein the network receiving agent and the network lurking agent are designed to open devices as a result of the inquiry, the devices enabling communication.

19. (Amended) A Scalable Infrastructure system according to claim 14, wherein;
the network lurking agent is designed to send a message when the inquiry is refused;
and
the network receiver is designed to refuse the inquiry and to receive the message from the network lurking agent.

20. (Amended) A method for using a network receiving agent to update an environment setting in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the method comprising:
receiving sensor input from a device in an environment; and
updating the environment setting based on the sensor input.

21. A method according to claim 20, wherein updating the environment setting includes updating the environment setting to reflect the availability of the device.

22. A method according to claim 20, wherein updating the user preference setting includes updating the environment setting to reflect the availability of a user.

23. A method according to claim 20, the method further comprising;
receiving an inquiry; and
sending a message in response to the inquiry.

24. (Amended) A computer-readable medium containing a program to use a network receiving agent to update an environment setting in a Scalable Infrastructure system on a

computer system, the program being executable on the computer system to implement the method of claim 20.

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25. (Amended) A method for using a network lurking agent to electronically lurk to an environment in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the method comprising:

lurking to the environment; and

inquiring as to the availability of the environment.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein inquiring as to the availability of the environment includes inquiring as to the availability of a user in the environment.

27. A method according to claim 25, the method further comprising responding to the inquiry by a network receiving agent.

28. A method according to claim 27, wherein responding to the inquiry includes accessing devices by the network lurking agent and the network receiving agent to enable communication.

29. A method according to claim 27, wherein responding to the inquiry includes:
refusing the inquiry by the network receiving agent;
sending a message from the network lurking agent to the network receiving agent; and
storing the message for later access from the environment.

30. A method according to claim 27, wherein responding to the inquiry includes:
sending a message from the network receiving agent to the network lurking agent; and
receiving the message at the network lurking agent.

31. A computer-readable medium containing a program to use a network lurking agent to electronically lurk to a location on a computer system, the program being executable on the computer system to implement the method of claim 25.

32. (Amended) An apparatus for using a network receiving agent to update an environment setting in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the apparatus comprising:

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means for receiving sensor input from a device in an environment; and

means for updating the environment setting based on the sensor input.

33. An apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the means for updating includes means for updating the environment setting to reflect the availability of the device.

34. An apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the means for updating includes means for updating the environment setting to reflect the availability of a user.

35. An apparatus according to claim 32, the apparatus further comprising;
means for receiving an inquiry; and
means for sending a message in response to the inquiry.

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36. (Amended) An apparatus for using a network lurking agent to electronically lurk to an environment in a Scalable Infrastructure system, the apparatus comprising:

means for lurking to the environment; and

means for inquiring as to the availability of the environment

37. An apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the means for inquiring includes means for inquiring as to the availability of a user in the environment.

38. An apparatus according to claim 36, the apparatus further comprising means for responding to the inquiry by a network receiving agent.

39. An apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the means for responding includes means for accessing devices by the network lurking agent and the network receiving agent to enable communication.

40. An apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the means for responding includes:
means for refusing the inquiry by the network receiving agent;
means for sending a message from the network lurking agent to the network receiving agent; and
means for storing the message for later access from the environment.

41. An apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the means for responding includes:
means for sending a message from the network receiving agent to the network lurking
agent; and
means for receiving the message at the network lurking agent.